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LAFAYETTE VISTAS

GOV. 101

First in an occasional series of articles introducing the history and basic principles of municipal government.

LAND USE PLANNING: AN EVOLVING DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

Official debate about land use planning in the United States goes back to the turn of the century. The unspoiled vistas and vibrant downtown areas we enjoy today are the result of decades of concerted efforts by elected officials and communities working to create land use policies mindful of the importance of adequate space for residential, commercial and recreational uses. Their success in influencing development is in a large part due to an evolution in the land use planning process that has increasingly reflected the needs and aspirations of area residents and business people.

In the early 1900s, land use planning in the U.S. tried to resolve the inherent conflict between the rights of citizens and the police power of the Government. While the Constitution afforded citizens protection against the taking of property without just compensation and due process of law, it also empowered the Government to restrict land use to protect the public's health, safety, welfare and morals.

The adoption of a zoning ordinance by New York City in 1916 was the first significant governmental step in regulating land use. Over the next few years, many jurisdictions adopted zoning regulations to separate incompatible land uses, control densities, or simply prohibit land uses considered undesirable in specific neighborhoods. In the 1926 landmark case, Village of Euclid, OH v. Amber Realty Company, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of zoning as a *(cont. on page 3)*

"BART BLOCK DISCUSSION GROUP" TO NEGOTIATE LAFAYETTE TOWN CENTER

At its November 25 meeting, the Lafayette City Council failed to approve a proposal for development of the "BART Block." Instead, Council members designated a BART Block Discussion Group (BBDG) to work with the developer to explore revisions to their plan that would create a retail, residential and office mix which is more in conformity with the BART Block Specific Plan.

The BBDG, which will meet with the developer during the 60-day extension of the Town Center project, includes the Mayor, City Manager and Community Development Director. The revised proposal will be discussed at the January 27 City Council Meeting.

While there was consensus that the project could not be approved as proposed, the Council also expressed its willingness to work with the developer to come up with a plan that was mutually beneficial, including allocating city resources to contribute to the success of the project. The priorities to be considered in revising the plan include significant increases in proposed parking, realigning Lafayette Circle, closing South Thompson Road, removing proposed homes from the creek setback and creating a wider more attractive pedestrian walkway link from Mt. Diablo Blvd. to BART.

The application to develop the "BART Block," the property on Mt. Diablo Blvd. south of the Lafayette BART station, has been on the public hearing circuit for more than a year; the proposal has progressed through 14 public meetings over the past two years. It currently includes four retail buildings totaling 25,000 square feet along Mt.Diablo Blvd., a 10,000 square foot office building, 20 houses designed as live/work space, with room for a professional office on the ground floor and a pedestrian path to the BART station.

For information about the Lafayette Town Center, call Planning Services Manager Mike Henn at 284-1976.

Lafayette Requests Reconsideration of Moraga's PALOS COLORADOS DEVELOPMENT

The Palos Colorados development would sit on the ridgeline that borders Lafayette to the south, and would include 146 single family homes and an 18-hole golf course.

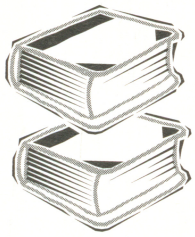
(See story on page 2)

Library Benefits from Doubled Dollar Donations

Last year, the Friends of the Lafayette Library raised funds to increase the length of time the Library is open each week from 29 to 39 hours.

The extended services, which cost $50,000 beyond what is provided by the County, were made possible by community donations of $25,000 collected by the Friends, and a matching grant of $25,000 by the City of Lafayette. Since the City Council has again offered to match funds raised by the community, the Friends are hopeful that they'll be able to keep the Library open for the same extended schedule throughout the 1996-1997 fiscal year.

The City Council's matching grant means that all dollar donations will be doubled — your $25 gift will actually generate $50 for the fund. If you'd like to contribute, send your check to: Friends of the Lafayette Library, 952 Moraga Road, Lafayette CA 94549. Donations are fully tax deductible.

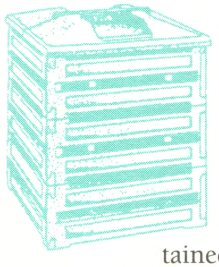


Library Hours

Mon: 10:00 am – 6:00 pm
Tues: 12:00 pm – 8:00 pm
Wed: 12:00 pm – 8:00 pm
Thurs: 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm
Fri: 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm
Sat: 10:00 am – 5:00 pm

Save $35 on a New Composter

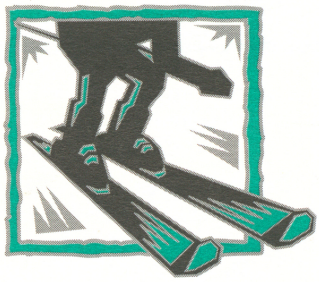
The Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority's (CCSWA) Home Composting for Busy People program is discounting the price of the popular Biostack home compost bin to residents of Lafayette.



The unique Biostack bin uses a stacking design to make effective composting easier, faster, and more attractive. It's double-walled construction promotes air venting and ensures healthy and sustained composting.

Although the composting bin is sold at retail for $80 or more, the CCSWA will ship it direct to your door for only $45 (tax and shipping included). Residents who would like to order a Biostack compost bin should call the Home Composting Hotline at 510-906-1806. You can also request a free videotape and information about free workshops.

Teen Times



Tri-City Dances
2/21: 8th Grade
3/7: 7th Grade

Ski & Snowboard Trips
1/18: Bear Valley
2/1: Northstar
2/8: Sierra Tahoe
2/21-23: Northstar, Boreal Sugar Bowl
3/8: Heavenly
3/22: Squaw Valley
4/5: Kirkwood

Roller Hockey Camp & Leagues
4/7-11: Roller Hockey Camp
4/14: Spring Roller Hockey Begins
6/16-20: Roller Hockey Camp

Please contact the Lafayette Community Center at 284-2232 for more information about these and other activities for teens.

Palos Colorados Development *(Cont. from front page)*

In an unusual move, the City of Lafayette asked the Town of Moraga to reconsider its approval of the Palos Colorados development project. The project, proposed for property that borders Lafayette, would include 146 single family homes and an 18-hole golf course. The reconsideration was requested because of the developer's failure to incorporate provisions into the project that would relieve the significant regional impacts affecting Lafayette and the quality of life of its residents.

Lafayette's position since the project was first proposed 2½ years ago has been that, as currently proposed, the Palos Colorados project will have a negative impact on the City of Lafayette and the region. This impact is due in large part to the size of the development and its single access point onto Moraga Rd. For example, the majority of the traffic headed from the development to the I-680/Hwy 24 corridor will travel through downtown Lafayette, causing congestion, affecting air quality and increasing road maintenance.

In Sept. '96, Lafayette first appealed Moraga's Aug. '96 approval of the project. The appeal was denied, prompting the request for reconsideration. The newly elected Moraga Town Council subsequently agreed to reconsider that denial.

Lafayette's major complaints include:

- Significant and unavoidable traffic impacts, including failure to consider alternate locations for emergency vehicle access and failure to study intersections with and without traffic signals in Lafayette,
- Environmental impacts caused by remedial earth-moving and grading on the site,
- Failure to study the duration of erosive flows into area creeks, and
- Failure to study the impacts of the golf course irrigation on off-site drainage, erosion and landslide activity on neighborhoods including Lafayette Valley Estates and Countrystone.

Moraga has not yet set a date for reconsideration of this project. Please call Community Development Director Niroop Srivatsa at 284-1976 for a project update.

Land Use Planning *(Cont. from front page)*

legitimate use of the Government's police power.

In the 1930s, California, which has always been on the forefront of land use regulation, took the significant step of requiring all cities and counties to plan for long term growth by adopting a General Plan and creating a planning agency. These requirements, when combined with the local Zoning Ordinance, are the backbone of the planning process that exists today.

The General Plan requirement forces cities and counties to plan for future growth by adopting broad development goals and policies. The Zoning Ordinance obliges them to implement these goals by designating appropriate uses for each parcel of land within the jurisdiction. Both the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance are designed to be responsive to residents and property owners, since they must be adopted by the local elected governing body through a public hearing process.

Local jurisdictions in California usually have both a Planning Commission and a Planning Department. The Planning Department staff performs short and long term planning and advises local decision makers regarding development issues. The Planning Commission is a decision-making body made up of residents who are usually appointed by local elected officials.

The original impetus for the creation of Planning Commissions was to take the authority of approving development out of the hands of politicians and put it into the hands of non-partisan citizens. The role of Planning Commissioners is to balance the rights of property owners and the Government's policing power in deciding whether current development proposals conform to the goals of the General Plan and are an appropriate land use as defined in the Zoning Ordinance.

While the evolving land use planning process put decision-making authority into the hands of the people, in reality it was first controlled by powerful politicians and big business. However, the quick pace of development in the late '50s and throughout the '60s acted as a catalyst for individuals and small business groups to organize and exercise their political rights.

One result of new found citizen empowerment was the adoption of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in 1970. The Act mandated that all major development projects undergo an environmental impact review, forcing developers to consider the potential environmental impacts of a project from the very beginning.

The effect of CEQA and other major planning process reforms has been development that is much more responsive to the needs of individuals and communities. The planning process has evolved to become highly democratic — but like the right to vote, it is most effective when everyone participates.

Lafayette was incorporated in 1968 primarily so that local residents could more carefully control local land use planning. The City's original general plan has served the City well, and is currently being revised and updated. The many volunteers who have served on the City's planning and design review commissions through the years have kept a vigilant eye on development in Lafayette, and we are indebted to them for their service.

AROUND TOWN

Meetings — **LAFAYETTE JUNIOR WOMEN'S CLUB** – Meets the first Thursday of every month at 7:00 pm, Sequoia Room, Lafayette Community Center. Membership is open to the public. For more information, call 939-7680.

Jan 22 or 25 — **MAGIC WORKSHOP** – Learn the tricks of the magic trade! For 6-9 year olds. Call 284-2232.

Jan 24 — **MISSION IMPOSSIBLE!** – It's teen movie night at the Lafayette Community Center. $5 gets you all the hot dogs & chips you can eat! 6th, 7th and 8th graders only. Doors open at 6:30 pm. Reservations required, 284-2232.

Jan 27 — **BART BLOCK PUBLIC HEARING** – The City Council is tentatively scheduled to deliberate on development proposals for the 3.5 acre parcel located near the BART station, 7:30 pm, Lafayette Community Center. Call 284-1968 to verify date and time.

Feb 1 & 15 — **VINTAGE BOOKS FOR SALE** – The Friends of the Lafayette Library have thousands of nearly new books from which to choose and purchase. Or, clean out your shelves and donate spare volumes. All sales help keep the Library open on evenings and weekends. 9:00 am to Noon on the 1st & 3rd Sat. of each month. Lafayette Community Center.

Feb 3 — **GOALS & PRIORITIES** – The Council and staff will meet in a workshop-style forum to discuss the City's priorities for '97, '98 and beyond. 7:30 pm, Laf. Comm. Center.

Feb – Mar — **RAD SKI & SNOWBOARD EXCITEMENT** – The Recreation Dept. is coordinating trips to Tahoe ski resorts for teens. Call 284-2232 for more information.

Feb 22 — **SUPER SITTERS** – A positive approach to babysitting, with the goal of empowering teens and teaching professionalism. 11 am – 5 pm. Call the Rec. Dept, 284-2232.

Apr 14 — **BUSINESS FAIR** – A showcase of Lamorinda businesses at the Lafayette Park Hotel. Call 284-7404 for more information.

Lafayette Juniors Fund Two Important Community Service Projects

The Lafayette Suburban Junior Women's Club recently donated nearly $4,000 in support of its two major philanthropies for the '95-'96 year: the Lafayette Library and the children's playground fence at the Lafayette Community Center.

The Juniors awarded a check for $2,350 to the Lafayette Library to be used for the procurement of new children's books.

In addition, the Juniors gave a gift of $1,250 to the Lafayette Community Center Foundation, fulfilling its pledge to help fund the construction of a fence surrounding the Center's playground.

An ambitious rummage sale provided the bulk of its fundraising dollars, as well as a variety of "mini-fundraisers", which included the preparation and sale of gourmet sauces and jams.

The Lafayette Junior Women's Club is a philanthropic and social organization dedicated to the betterment of the community. Membership is open to the public. To learn more, call 939-7680.

Historic Snapshots

Part 4: Community Spirit, Civic Pride Increase as Pace Quickens in Lafayette

In the fourth installment of "Historic Snapshots," our ongoing series on the history of Lafayette, we highlight the emergence of an organized community spirit fostered by Lafayette's transition from a village surrounded by small farms into a rapidly developing rural town at the turn of the century.

Increased traffic and road maintenance were among the major concerns of the residents of Lafayette at the turn of the century. The town's location made it a convenient stopping place between the Moraga redwoods and Martinez, and as transportation and its infrastructure developed, Lafayette also became a rest stop for travelers from Oakland.

Since Mt. Diablo Blvd. was shared by horse, buggy and autos as late as 1938, it is not surprising that the hospitality business was one of Lafayette's earliest commercial developments. Though a number of small hotels built after 1850 had been destroyed by fire, Edward J. Brady was undaunted as he established the Way Side Inn on Golden Gate Way as a hotel and tavern in 1894. Philip Lamp built the third hotel to stand at "Hotel Corner" (today's intersection of Mt. Diablo Blvd. and Moraga Rd.) in 1900.

As befitted the developing town and its growing population, in 1893 Lafayette erected its third school building, financed with a special tax of $2,000. Jennie Bickerstaff, who taught there from 1899 to 1902 was Lafayette's best known pioneer teacher. In 1915, the Lafayette branch of the County library replaced the subscription library founded in 1860, which is believed to be the first public library service in the county.

The Town Hall, on the corner of Moraga Rd and School St., was built in 1914 and is currently used by the Dramateurs to produce local talent plays.

As the population grew, so did civic pride, and local citizens gathered to discuss ways in which to better their community. Topics included road building and maintenance, improved postal service and police officer response time, and perhaps the most popular concern, the possibility of constructing a hall for social events.

Robert McNeil (whose mother was born on the wagon train led by Lafayette's founder Elam Brown), owner of the Shreve Store (the name was changed to the Pioneer Market in the 1920s), was one of the founding members of the Town's first organized civic effort, the Lafayette Improvement Club (LIC). The Club's launch in 1911 helped to give the people of Lafayette the impetus they needed to build Town Hall, a treasured historic building on Moraga Road that is still in use today.

The Town Hall project was given a big boost by Frank and Rosa Ghiglione, who deeded the building site to the LIC and donated $200 toward building costs. The existing structure was built in 1914 with the help of hired day labor and the men of Lafayette, who volunteered their time on week-ends and evenings.

Although the Town Hall is today, and has always been, associated with entertainment, two of its primary functions were originally as a place where community events could be held and where money could be raised for improvements to Lafayette and the surrounding area. The Town Hall has also been called into service as a temporary library, and on occasion, as temporary classrooms while new facilities were being built to accommodate the ever growing population.

Photos provided by and printed courtesy of the Lafayette Library Historical Archives.
Thanks to Bill Wakeman and the Lafayette Historical Society for their ongoing contributions to this series.

City Directory

Leave your Council Members a message on the City's voice mail system!
Call 299-3232

Officers

		EXT.
Donald L. Tatzin	**Mayor**	**272**
Anne Grodin	**Vice Mayor**	**274**
Judy Garvens	**Council Member**	**273**
Erling Horn	**Council Member**	**271**
Vacant	**Council Member**	**270**

For messages to **all** Council Members: **907**

The City Council meets at 7:00 pm on the second and fourth Monday of the month at the Lafayette Community Center, 500 St. Mary's Road.

Staff Contacts

Steven B. Falk	**City Manager**
Rebecca Lee	**Admin. Srvs. Director**
Niroop K. Srivatsa	**Comm. Dev. Director**
Mark Lander	**City Engineer**
Mike Henn	**Planning Serv. Mgr.**
Jennifer Russell	**Parks and Rec. Director**
Tony Coe	**Public Works Serv. Mgr.**
Sue Jusaitis	**City Clerk**
Mike Ilg	**Police Services Mgr.**
Juliet Shanks	**School Bus Coordinator**

City Offices and Police

Street Address:	**3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Suite 210**
Mailing Address:	**P.O. Box 1968 Lafayette, CA 94549-1968**

City Telephone Numbers

Administration:	**284-1968**
Engineering:	**284-1951**
Planning:	**284-1976**
Parks and Rec:	**284-2232**
Public Works:	**284-1968**
Senior Services:	**284-5050**
Police Business:	**284-5010**
Police Emergency:	**911**
Voice Mail System:	**299-3232**

LAFAYETTE VISTAS

is published for the residents of Lafayette and reports on issues, people and events that affect our city. As a member of this community, you are encouraged to contact us with your questions and comments. We request all correspondence be sent to:

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